

need to take further action in the future to end custody relinquishment across the country.

This bill is a great start, however, the bill is only large enough to provide a handful of States with grants. Therefore, it is critical that we work with the aforementioned task force to examine what is working in the grantee States. We can then begin to implement those solutions in all States.

We have known about this problem for many years. Along with my colleagues, Senator COLLINS and HARKIN and Representatives RAMSTAD and KENNEDY, I have worked hard to educate the public and the Congress about this issue. Unfortunately, education and awareness are no longer enough. We first introduced legislation on this issue in 1995. Now is the time to act.

The "Keeping Families Together Act" is a crucial first step toward ending the barbaric practice of custody relinquishment. I hope my colleagues and I can work together to quickly implement this legislation. This bill will allow many, but not all, States to develop innovative new programs that address the mental health needs of children while keeping families intact. Once we have learned what succeeds at the State level, we must then return to this issue and enact legislation that will end the practice of custody relinquishment in all States.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act of 2007. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important bill, and I congratulate Speaker PELOSI and Chairman MILLER for bringing this legislation to the floor in the first 100 hours. This action is a clear indication that the new democratic majority understands that college affordability is a key part of ensuring our global competitiveness in the future.

H.R. 5 will cut the interest rate on student loans in half over the next 5 years. This will save students an average of \$4,400 over the life of their loan. And because the effort is focused on subsidized loans, the relief will assist those who need it most—low and middle income families.

The cost of higher education is growing out of reach for too many Americans. Tuition has increased 60 percent at the University of Minnesota since 2000 and student debt loads are skyrocketing. A recent study showed that this debt load is causing graduating students to delay decisions such as buying a home, getting married, or having children.

The College Student Relief Act is important, not only for students and families, but for our country. If we do not address this problem, by 2020 the United States is projected to face a shortage of up to 12 million college-educated workers. Our strength as a nation has always been the talent and skills of our citizens. To ensure this continues, the most important investment this Congress can and must make is in the education of our people. Access to quality education, including vocational and tech-

nical training schools, will prepare a highly skilled workforce to compete in the growing global economy.

And today we can make an investment in our future without adding to the deficit. H.R. 5 meets the Democrats new pay-as-you-go requirements by increasing efficiencies in the current program and redirecting the savings back to students. This is in stark contrast to the Republican plan last year which cut \$12 billion from the student aid program and used those savings to pay for tax cuts for the Nation's wealthiest.

H.R. 5 is a promise kept and a first step in improving access to higher education. I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue this effort throughout the 110th Congress.

HONORING CAPTAIN ROBERT L. CURBEAM

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Robert L. Curbeam, Captain, United States Navy and National Aeronautics and Space Administration Astronaut. Over the years, Captain Curbeam has served his country to the best of his ability and deserves recognition for his leadership and accomplishments.

Captain Curbeam was raised in Turner's Station, and graduated from Woodlawn High School in Baltimore County, Maryland, in 1980. He received his bachelor of science degree in aerospace engineering from the United States Naval Academy in 1984. He received his master of science degree in aeronautical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1990 and a degree of aeronautical and astronautical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1991. He is currently a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association and the Association of Old Crows. Captain Curbeam's numerous awards include Fighter Wing One Radar Intercept Officer of the Year for 1989 and the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School Best Developmental Thesis Award.

Upon graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy, Captain Curbeam commenced Naval Flight Officer training in 1984. In 1986 he reported to Fighter Squadron 11 and made overseas deployments to the Mediterranean and Caribbean Seas, and the Arctic and Indian Oceans on board the USS *Forrestal*. During his tour with Fighter Squadron 11, he also attended Navy Fighter Weapons School. Upon completion of Test Pilot School in December 1991, he reported to the Strike Aircraft Test Directorate where he was the project officer for the F-14A/B Air-to-Ground Weapons Separation Program. In August 1994, he returned to the U.S. Naval Academy as an instructor in the Weapons and Systems Engineering Department.

Selected to be an astronaut by NASA in December 1994, Curbeam reported to the Johnson Space Center in March 1995. After completing a year of training and evaluation, he was assigned to the Computer Support Branch in the Astronaut Office. A veteran of two space flights, STS-85 in 1997 and STS-

98 in 2001, Curbeam logged over 593 hours in space, including over 19 EVA hours during three spacewalks. Curbeam served as a spacecraft communicator (CAPCOM) responsible for relaying all voice communication between Mission Control and crews aboard the Space Shuttle and International Space Station. During the spring of 2002, he served as Deputy Associate Administrator for Safety and Mission Assurance, at NASA Headquarters, Washington, DC. Currently, Curbeam serves as the Safety Branch Chief for the Astronaut Office.

Captain Curbeam was named to NASA's most recent mission STS-116 in 2003. The mission launched on December 9, 2006. During Space Shuttle *Discovery's* 13-day mission to the International Space Station, the STS-116 crew continued construction of the station during the first of four spacewalks. The next two spacewalks rewired the station's power system, preparing it to support the station's final configuration and the arrival of additional science modules. A fourth spacewalk was added to allow the crew to retract solar arrays that had folded improperly.

As the only STS-116 crew member to participate in all four spacewalks, Captain Curbeam set a Space Shuttle Program record for the most spacewalks performed by one astronaut during a single mission.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor CAPT Robert L. Curbeam. He is a remarkable leader and has served the citizens of Maryland and the United States exceptionally throughout his career.

TRIBUTE TO SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Parish in my hometown of Collinsville, Illinois, on their 150th anniversary. The parish is a part of the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois.

The first church was built in 1856 on the land that is still owned by the parish. The first pastor of the church, Father W. Repis, came in November 1857. The parish is currently ministered by Rev. John Beveridge, pastor since 1999, and Rev. Aloysius O. Ndeanaefo, parochial vicar.

In 1863, grounds for the cemetery were purchased. In 1879, the Parish school was opened, and it remains committed to a Christian education today.

On December 31, 2005, the parish began celebrating their sesquicentennial. After a full year of special events, a concluding mass will be celebrated by Bishop George Lucas on January 14, 2007.

I am pleased to congratulate Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Parish on this accomplishment. May God bless Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Parish.